

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An isolated and purified nucleic acid molecule that encodes protease T, and functional derivatives thereof.
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2. The isolated and purified nucleic acid molecule of claim 1, having a nucleotide sequence selected from a group consisting of: (SEQ.ID.NO.:1), (SEQ.ID.NO.8) and functional derivatives thereof.
- 10 3. The isolated and purified nucleic acid molecule of claim 1, wherein said nucleic acid molecule is selected from a group consisting of cDNA, RNA, mRNA and genomic DNA.
- 15 4. An expression vector, wherein said vector contains a nucleic acid sequence encoding protease T protein, and functional derivatives thereof.
5. The expression vector of claim 4, wherein the nucleic acid sequence encoding protease T protein is selected from a group consisting of (SEQ.ID.NO.:1), (SEQ.ID.NO.:8), and functional derivatives thereof.
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6. The expression vector of claim 4, wherein the nucleic acid sequence is selected from a group consisting of cDNA, RNA, and genomic DNA.
7. A recombinant host cell containing the expression vector of claim 4.
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8. The recombinant host cell of claim 7, wherein said expression vector contains a nucleic acid sequence selected from a group consisting of (SEQ.ID.NO.:1), (SEQ.ID.NO.:8) and functional derivatives thereof.

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9. The recombinant host cell of claim 7, wherein said nucleic acid sequence is selected from a group consisting of genomic DNA, RNA, and cDNA.
- 5 10. A protein in substantially pure form that functions as protease T protein.
- 10 11. The protein according to claim 10, having an amino acid sequence selected from a group consisting of (SEQ.ID.NO.:7), (SEQ.ID.NO.:9) and functional derivatives thereof.
- 15 12. A monospecific antibody immunologically reactive with protease T protein.
13. The antibody of Claim 12, wherein the antibody blocks protease activity of the protein.
14. A process for expression of protease T protein in a recombinant host cell, comprising:
- 20 (a) transferring the expression vector of Claim 4 into suitable host cells; and
- (b) culturing the host cells of step (a) under conditions which allow expression of the protease T protein from the expression vector.
- 25 15. A method of identifying compounds that modulate protease T protein activity, comprising:
- (a) combining a modulator of protease T protein activity, protease T protein, and a labeled substrate; and
- (b) measuring a change in the labeled substrate.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein the labeled substrate is selected from a
group consisting of flourogenic, colormetric, radiometric, and fluorescent
resonance energy transfer (FRET).
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17. A compound active in the method of Claim 15, wherein said
compound is a modulator of protease T serine protease activity.
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18. The compound of Claim 17, wherein said compound is an agonist or
antagonist of protease T serine protease activity.
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19. The compound of Claim 17, wherein said compound is a modulator of
expression of protease T serine protein.
20. A method of treating a patient in need of such treatment for a condition
that is mediated by protease T, comprising administration of the compound of
Claim 17.
21. A kit comprising a nucleic acid sequence selected from a group
consisting of SEQ.ID.NO.:1 and SEQ.ID.NO.:8, nucleic acid sequence that
encodes protease T protein according to SEQ.ID.NO.:7, and fragments thereof.
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22. A kit comprising the serine protease T protein selected from the group
consisting of SEQ.ID.NO.:7 and SEQ.ID.NO.:9, and fragments or derivatives
thereof.
23. A pharmaceutical composition comprising the protein of claim 10.

24. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 23 wherein said composition is a topical skin care composition.

25. A non-pharmaceutical composition comprising the protien of claim 10.

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26. The non-pharmaceutical composition of claim 25 wherein the composition is selected from a group consisting of laundry detergent, shampoo, hard surface cleaning composition, and dishcare cleaning composition.

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27. A method of treating an imbalance of desquamation comprising topical application of the composition of claim 24.

PAPERS REFERENCED